

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00
SS-15 PM-05 H-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-02 SP-02 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /109 R

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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

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SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 9, 1978

FOLLOWING ARE THE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 9, 1978:

MESSRS. MUGABE AND NKOMO WILL NOT BE IN TO SEE THE SEC-
RETARY AT 5 O'CLOCK THIS AFTERNOON BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS
WITH THEIR SCHEDULE IN NEW YORK.

Q: DOES THAT MEAN THE UN? IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?

A: THERE ARE VARIOUS CONSULTATIONS GOING ON UP THERE AND THEY JUST COULDN'T GET TO TOWN TODAY.

Q: WILL THEY BE IN LATER?

Q: WHEN ARE THEY COMING?

A: I WOULD ASSUME THAT ATTEMPTS WILL BE MADE TO SET UP THE MEETING IN THE FUTURE, YES.

Q: WHAT POLITICAL SIGNALS ARE YOU INTENDING TO CONVEY WITH THEIR CHANGE OF SCHEDULES?

A: NONE WHATSOEVER, AND THAT WAS THE --

Q: WHEN THEY CANCELLED THE MEETING TODAY, WAS THERE NOT SOME CONVERSATION ABOUT RESCEDULING?

A: I JUST DON'T KNOW WHETHER THERE WAS OR NOT, BUT THEY HAD INTENDED TO SEE HIM TODAY AND I DON'T SEE ANY REASON FOR THAT INTENTION TO CHANGE.
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Q: WHAT WAS THE REMARK ABOUT THE RAILROAD? WHERE YOU SUGGESTING YOU ARE ON THE RAILROAD WHILE WE ARE NOT?

A: NO, I DON'T SUGGEST THAT AT ALL.

Q: TOM, WITHOUT BEATING IT TO DEATH, CAN YOU TELL US HOW AND WHEN THEY ADVISED THE SECRETARY OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT THEY COULDN'T MAKE THEIR DATE TODAY?

A: NO, BARRY, I CAN'T. BUT, AS I SAY, THERE'S NO BIG SIGNAL TO IT. I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENED. I DON'T KNOW THE REASONS FOR JAMMING UP THEIR SCHEDULE, HOW IT SUDDENLY GOT JAMMED UP IN NEW YORK. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q: WELL, YOU KNOW, IT'S JUST THAT WE HAVE THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM OF HAVING PUT OUT STORIES SAYING THAT THEY WOULD SEE HIM AND, SECONDLY, KIND IN THE BACK OF MY MIND IS YOUR PROBLEM THAT PEOPLE DON'T JUST USUALLY CALL UP THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND SAY, "SOMETHING CAME UP," YOU KNOW. "I'LL SEE YOU NEXT TIME I'M AROUND." USUALLY APPOINTMENTS WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE ARE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY, AND USUALLY THERE'S SOME PRIORITY INVOLVED.

DID THEY HAVE BIGGER BUSINESS THAN TO SEE THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR ARE THEY NOT QUITE READY TO PUT THEIR CASE TO HIM?

I REALLY WISH YOU'D ELABORATE BECAUSE I JUST DON'T THINK APPOINTMENTS WITH MR. VANCE ARE CASUALLY CANCELLED.

A: NO; I DON'T THINK THEY ARE EITHER, AND I DON'T THINK THESE TWO GENTLEMEN THINK THEY ARE EITHER. WE CAN'T GO INTO THE REASONS WHY THEY ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO BE HERE AT 5 O'CLOCK TODAY.

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BUT THERE COULD BE ANY NUMBER OF REASONS. FOR INSTANCE, BISHOP MUZOREWA WAS SUPPOSED TO SEE THE SECRETARY A DAY EARLIER AND THEN HE ULTIMATELY DID; AND IF YOU RECALL,

THE REASON WAS THAT HE HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING ON AN AIR-PLANE OUT OF LONDON.

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THESE PARTICULAR REASONS ARE.

Q: CAN YOU CONFIRM OR DENY THE NKOMO OFFICE IN NEW YORK SAYING THAT THEY'LL BE HERE ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON?

A: I CAN'T NO. I'LL CHECK THAT FOR YOU.

Q: ON THAT SAME GENERAL SUBJECT, CAN YOU GO THROUGH WITH US A CHRONOLOGY OF THE ANDREW YOUNG STATEMENT -- WHY IT WAS MADE AND WHY IT WAS WITHDRAWN, AND WHETHER YOU THINK IT HAS HAD ANY EFFECT ON THE BRITISH-AMERICAN FRONT ON THESE NEGOTIATIONS?

A: NO. I CAN'T REALLY GO THROUGH A CHRONOLOGY ON IT, BUT LET ME SAY THAT THE STATEMENT WHICH WAS ISSUED HERE JOINTLY BETWEEN FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN AND SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE, IN WHICH THEY SAID THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD PROCEED TOGETHER ON THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF RHODESIA, IS POLICY --

Q: IT WASN'T THOUGH.

A: -- AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WITHDREW HIS STATEMENT.

Q: YES, BUT WHY DID HE WITHDRAW IT IS THE QUESTION.
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A: BECAUSE IT DID NOT REPRESENT POLICY.

Q: DID THE SECRETARY SPEAK WITH THE AMBASSADOR BETWEEN THE ISSUING OF THE STATEMENT AND THE WITHDRAWAL?

A: YES, I BELIEVE HE DID.

Q: I THINK THE CHRONOLOGY IS RELEVANT. THE STATEMENT WAS ORIGINALLY MADE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. WHEN DID HE WITHDRAW IT -- YESTERDAY?

A: I THINK IT WAS LAST NIGHT. I THINK IT ORIGINALLY

APPEARED ON THE WEST COAST, AS A MATTER OF FACT, AND PEOPLE BECAME AWARE THAT THERE WAS A TIME LAG THERE.

Q: AND PEOPLE DID SPEAK TO HIM ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF WITYDRAWING IT? IS THAT --

A: I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO DEEP INTO THIS. I THINK I HAVE GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS I'M GOING TO GO ON THIS.

Q: DIDN'T HE MAKE A REMARK ON THE RECORD AND IN THE UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT, IN A MEETING, BECAUSE HIS OFFICE TODAY SAYS HE'S ASKING FOR IT TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE UNITED NATIONS RECORD.

A: THAT'S NOT MY IMPRESSION OF HOW IT CAME UP, BUT I AM VERY HAZY ON IT. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS CAME UP IN AN OFFICIAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THAT'S NOT MY IMPRESSION OF HOW IT CAME UP. BUT I AM VERY HAZY OF HOW IT ORIGINALLY CAME UP, I'M AFRAID.

Q: DOES TAKING BACK A STATEMENT IN THIS CASE AMOUNT TO AN APOLOGY TO THE BRITISH?
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A: I'M NOT GOING TO CHARACTERIZE IT. THE STATEMENT WAS WITHDRAWN AND --

Q: DID HE SAY, "I'M SORRY; I GOOFED" OR SOMETHING -- OR WHAT?

A: HE WITHDREW THE STATEMENT, AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY FURTHER STATE OF PLAY ON IT.

Q: MAY I HAVE TIME TO FOLLOW THAT UP? DO YOU SHARE HIS BELIEF THAT IT IS UNNECESSARY TO APOLOGIZE BECAUSE "IT WOULD ADD INJURY TO AN UNNECESSARY INSULT"?

A: I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY VIEWS TO SHARE WITH YOU ABOUT WHETHER I SHARE VIEWS WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG.

Q: THE STATEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN WILL PROCEED TOGETHER ON THE RHODESIAN QUESTION, AND THAT BEING POLICY, CAN WE TAKE THAT TO MEAN THAT A BINDING COMMITMENT HAS NOW BEEN MADE THAT THE US AND THE

UK WILL VOTE TOGETHER ON ANY UN RESOLUTION REGARDING RHODESIA?

A: I THINK WE WENT THROUGH THIS QUESTION YESTERDAY OF BINDING COMMITMENTS.

Q: THIS STATEMENT CAME SUBSEQUENTLY TO WHAT YOU SAID YESTERDAY.

A: YES; BUT AS I SAID YESTERDAY, I JUST DON'T THINK THAT BETWEEN OLD ALLIES WE HAVE TO HAVE BINDING COMMITMENTS.
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WE HAVE PROCEEDED TOGETHER WITH THE BRITISH OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS ON THIS QUESTION OF RHODESIA. WE ARE PROCEEDING TOGETHER NOW AS TO WHAT OUR VOTES MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE FUTURE. I'M SURE THAT WILL DEPEND ON THE WORDING OF ANY RESOLUTION WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE PRESENTED OR CHANGED IN THE FUTURE. SO I DON'T WANT TO PREDICT OR SPECULATE FOR YOU NOW ON WHETHER THE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES ON THE MATTER OF RHODESIA WILL NECESSARILY INVOLVE VOTING TOGETHER ON EVERY SINGLE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION.

Q: ARE YOU STILL HOPEFUL OF BEING ABLE TO FORESTALL THE SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION ON THIS QUESTION? THERE WAS A LOT OF FEVERISH ACTIVITY HERE IN THE LAST 48 HOURS IN EFFORTS TO TRY TO FORESTALL SUCH A VOTE. ARE YOU STILL HOPEFUL THAT THAT IS POSSIBLE OR NOT?

A: WELL, THAT QUESTION CONTAINS AN ASSUMPTION THAT THERE ARE EFFORTS TO FORESTALL SOME DEBATE OR RESOLUTION; AND I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT FOR YOU.

Q: A TECHNICAL POINT: DO YOU KNOW WHERE NKOMO AND MUGABE ARE GOING TO BE AT 5 O'CLOCK?

A: I ASSUME THEY'LL BE IN NEW YORK.

Q: BUT WHERE?

A: THE GUIDANCE I HAVE SAYS THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COME TO TOWN BY THEN. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'LL BE IN NEW YORK.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE TALKS BETWEEN DICK MOOSE AND JOHN GRAHAME THIS MORNING?
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A: NO. I DON'T HAVE A SPECIFIC READOUT ON THAT. WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT? ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT THE HORN OR ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT RHODESIA, OR --

Q: WELL, I GUESS GRAHAME'S INVOLVED IN BOTH; BUT I'M WONDERING EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE DISCUSSING.

FIRST OF ALL, ARE THEY DISCUSSING BOTH SUBJECTS OR ONE OR THE OTHER?

A: I'M TRYING TO THINK NOW. I TALKED WITH DICK EARLIER

THIS MORNING. I THINK THEY'RE PROBABLY DISCUSSING BOTH.

Q: AND ON RHODESIA, WHAT SPECIFICALLY WOULD THEY BE DISCUSSING?

A: I THINK THEY'D BE DISCUSSING FOLLOWING UP ON THE MEETINGS YESTERDAY BETWEEN MESSRS. VANCE AND OWEN AND THE PRESIDENT ABOUT WHAT STEPS WE TAKE FROM HERE ON OUT ON THE RHODESIAN QUESTION.

Q: AND HOW ABOUT ON THE HORN?

A: WELL, LET ME SAY -- I HAVE JUST A BRIEF, TWO-SENTENCE THING HERE ABOUT THE HORN -- OUR INFORMATION LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA MAY WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN. WE HAVE CONTINUALLY HELD THAT A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE, AND WE BASE THIS ASSESSMENT ON VARIOUS REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OUR EMBASSY IN MOGADISCIO.

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Q: WHEN DID THESE REPORTS COME IN -- THE LAST 24 HOURS, OR --?

A: VERY RECENTLY; YES.

Q: ARE THEY FROM THE SOMALIAN GOVERNMENT OR --

A: NO. THEY'RE FROM OUR EMBASSY IN MOGADISCIO.

Q: YES, BUT I MEAN WHERE ARE THESE REPORTS REACHING THE EMBASSY FROM?

A: FROM THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT.

Q: DOES THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI FORCES FROM THE OGADEN QUALIFY SOMALI TO RECEIVE DEFENSIVE U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT?

A: I'M JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO ADDRESS THAT FOR YOU THIS AFTERNOON, I'M SORRY.

Q: WILL YOU BE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS IT AFTER 3 O' CLOCK?

A: I CAN'T SPECULATE ON WHEN I MIGHT BE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS IT WITH YOU, BUT THE EVENTS ARE MOVING VERY RAPIDLY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA NOW AND --

Q: ARE THEY GOOD GUYS AGAIN NOW?

A: I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION. WHAT WE'RE AFTER IS A SOLUTION.

Q: SINCE THIS DEVELOPMENT, HAS THERE BEEN ANY FRESH REASSURANCE, EITHER FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OR FROM THE RUSSIANS, THAT THE CONFLICT WILL NOT SPILL OVER UNCLASSIFIED

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INTO SOMALIA ONCE THE REGULAR FORCES OF SOMALIA HAVE WITHDRAWN?

A: NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF.

Q: BUT, IN ADDITION, IS ANYTHING BEING DONE TO ESTABLISH THIRD COUNTRY OR UN FORCES IN THE OGADEN TO PROTECT THE ETHNIC SOMALIS WHO LIVE THERE FROM REPRISALS?

A: I'M SORRY, I JUST CAN'T TALK ABOUT THAT WITH YOU NOW.

Q: HAVE YOU DISCUSSED THIS DEVELOPMENT WITH WHAT ARE CALLED THE "WESTERN ALLIES"?

A: SORRY. I CAN'T TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT.

Q: TOM, DOES WITHDRAWAL REMOVE THE BARRIER THEN FINALLY -- OR WHEN IT OCCURS, WILL THAT FINALLY REMOVE THE BARRIER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOMALIA AS FAR AS MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS CONCERNED?

Q: BARRY'S QUESTION.

A: I CAN'T SPECULATE ON WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF A DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT TAKE PLACE, WHICH IS THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN.

Q: TOM, HAVE YOU COMMUNICATED YOUR INFORMATION TO THE ETHIOPIANS AND TO THE RUSSIANS TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT AT LEAST A CEASE-FIRE? IN OTHER WORDS, IF THE TROOPS ARE

WITHDRAWING, WHY HAVE UNNECESSARY FIGHTING?

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A: WHY HAVE UNNECESSARY -- ?

Q: FIGHTING.

A: WELL, WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT A RESOLUTION CAN BE
FOUND WHICH WILL END THE BLOODSHED, AND THAT WILL HAVE TO
BE -- -- -

Q: MY POINT IS IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION THAT THEY'RE WITH-
DRAWING ALL THEIR FORCES FROM THE OGADEN, HAVE YOU COM-
MUNICATED THIS TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE OSTENSIBLY CHASING
THEM OUT?

A: THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES GOING ON,
AND I'M JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO THEM WITH YOU.

Q: TOM, IS THE RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AWARE OF THIS?

A: I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE THE SAME ANSWER TO THAT QUES-
TION THAT I JUST GAVE TO GRAHAM?

Q: WHEN WERE YOU INFORMED OF THESE REPORTS? WAS THAT THIS
MORNING OR EARLIER?

A: I THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EARLIER THAN DAYLIGHT THIS
MORNING.

Q: NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE TIMING? DOES YOUR INFORMATION IN-
DICATE WHEN THIS IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE?

A: WHEN THE WITHDRAWAL WILL TAKE PLACE?

Q: YES.

Q: WHEN WILL IT BE COMPLETED?
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A: ALL I HAVE SAID HERE IS THAT OUR INFORMATION LEADS US
TO BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA MAY WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM THE
OGADEN; AND I AM IN A VERY AWKWARD POSITION UP HERE, BUT
I AM JUST NOT AUTHORIZED TO GO INTO SPECIFICS WITH YOU.

Q: TOM, COULD YOU TELL US WHETHER YOUR INFORMATION IS
THAT SOMALIS IS VOLUNTARILY WITHDRAWING ITS FORCES OR
THAT THESE FORCES ARE FLEEING?

A: I THINK WE ARE TALKING HERE ABOUT A POSSIBLE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA.

Q: IS IT YOUR JUDGMENT THAT THE DECISION IS BEING MADE BECAUSE OF A FORCED MILITARY SITUATION AND THEY'RE BEING PUSHED BACK?

A: I HAVE NO JUDGMENT TO RENDER ON THAT QUESTION.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY SOMALI TROOPS ARE IN THE OGADEN? SOMALI REGULAR TROOPS?

A: NO, GEORGE, I DON'T. I CAN TRY TO CHECK THAT FOR YOU.

Q: IS THERE ANY UPDATED FIGURE ON THE SOVIET-CUBAN PRESENCE?

A: NO, THERE IS NOT.

Q: TOM, IS IT OUR BELIEF THAT THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT EXISTS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE REGULAR SOMALI FORCES?

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AND IF IT DOES, IS THERE ANY INDICATION OF WHAT THOSE PEOPLE WILL DO IN THE EVENT THAT THE SOMALI TROOPS WITHDRAW?

A: AS TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION, I CAN'T SPECULATE ON THAT; AND I AM SORRY, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON YOUR FIRST QUESTION.

Q: TOM, WHEN YOU SAY YOU UNDERSTAND IT TO MEAN -- THE

INFORMATION TO MEAN -- THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A POSSIBLE DECISION BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW -- WE WOULD TAKE IT TO MEAN, THEN, THAT YOUR INFORMATION INDICATES THE SOMALIS ARE "CONSIDERING" SUCH A DECISION AND HAVE NOT YET MADE IT. IS THAT CORRECT? OR IS IT THAT THEY HAVE MADE THE DECISION?

A: NO. LET ME TRY TO CLARIFY:

THE QUESTION FROM MR. KALB WAS: WAS THIS A WITHDRAWAL, OR WAS IT A ROUT OF FLEEING TROOPS.

AND WHAT MY STATEMENT GOES TO, IS THE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT -- A POSSIBLE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Q: YOU ARE STILL TALKING IN TERMS OF IT NOT YET BEING MADE

WHEN YOU SAY "POSSIBLE DECISION." WOULD YOU AMEND THAT TO SAY THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DECISION -- AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

A: JOHN, I CAN'T GO THAT FAR WITH YOU. THE STATEMENT HERE SAYS THAT WE HAVE INFORMATION WHICH LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA MAY WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN; AND I AM SORRY, SIR, I CAN'T GO WITH YOU AS TO AN ANSWER TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTION.

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Q: TOM, DID THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY, OR INDIRECTLY, LET THE U.S. EMBASSY KNOW THAT THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT THAT BECAUSE OF THE ARMS SALES TO ANGOLA -- OR HOW DID WE GET THIS INFORMATION THAT THEY ARE CONSIDERING THAT?

A: DO YOU MEAN: WHAT ARE THEIR REASONS FOR CONSIDERING --

Q: NO. DID THE GOVERNMENT LET THE EMBASSY KNOW, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THAT THEY ARE STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF PULLING THE TROOPS OUT? OR --

A: DIRECTLY --

Q: TO THE EMBASSY.

Q: TOM, HAVE WE BEEN OFFICIALLY ADVISED BY THE SOMALIS THAT THEY MAY WITHDRAW THEIR TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN -- OR IS THIS SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE LEARNED INDEPENDENTLY, OR SEPARATELY FROM OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION?

Q: VANCE SAID THIS ON THE HILL. CORRECT?

A: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT SECRETARY VANCE SAID THIS

MORNING ON THE HILL THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOMALIA MAY BE WITHDRAWING ITS TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN. THAT IS WHAT I HEARD.

Q: TOM, I AM TRYING TO FIGURE OUT, AS JOHN SCALI WAS -- ARE YOU ALL SET ON THAT?

Q: I GOT AN ANSWER.

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A: NO, YOU DIDN'T. CAN YOU ASK THE QUESTION AGAIN?

Q: WHETHER THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ADVISED

BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT THAT IT MAY WITHDRAW -- OR WHETHER THE UNITED STATES HAS LEARNED, INDEPENDENTLY FROM ANY SUCH OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION.

A: WELL, I JUST SAID TO JUAN THAT WE HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY -- OR THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALI HAS BEEN DIRECTLY IN TOUCH WITH THE EMBASSY.

Q: LAST SUMMER, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE WAS AN ADMINISTRATION INDICATION TO THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT THAT THEY MIGHT BE SUPPLIED WITH DEFENSIVE WEAPONS. AND THAT INDICATION WAS WITHDRAWN WHEN THEIR TROOPS INVADED THE OGADEN.

IF THEIR TROOPS WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN, DOESN'T THAT BRING THE SITUATION BACK TO THE POINT WHERE WE ARE WILLING TO SUPPLY THEM WITH DEFENSIVE WEAPONS?

A: NOT NECESSARILY, BECAUSE CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE OVER A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS. BUT I DON'T WANT TO LEAD YOU ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS FOR SOMALIA. I AM JUST NOT AUTHORIZED TO BE IN THAT POSITION NOW.

Q: TOM, WHEN THE SOMALIS INFORMED THE EMBASSY DIRECTLY ABOUT THEIR PLANS, DID THEY ALSO RENEW AGAIN THEIR REQUEST FOR ARMS.

A: NOW I SAID THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN DIRECT TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA. I HAVE NOT GONE INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS, AND I CANNOT GO INTO ANY PURPORTED REQUEST FOR ARMS IN MOGADISHO.

Q: CAN YOU SAY WHETHER THE UNITED STATES HAS INFORMED SOMALIA THAT A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL BY SOMALI WOULD BE UNCLASSIFIED

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IN THE INTERESTS OF EVERYBODY? HAVE WE BEEN PRESSURING THEM TO UNDERTAKE UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL?

A: YES.

Q: FINE. AND YOU ALSO -- THE PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME JUST THE OTHER DAY, CALLED SOMALIA THE "INVADER." WHEN SOMALIA INFORMED THE UNITED STATES OR THE AMBASSADOR, ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE PLANS.

DO THEY ACKNOWLEDGE, NOW, THAT THEY INVADED ETHIOPIA, OR IS THAT STILL, AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED ANOTHER MATTER?

A: I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO WHAT THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE NOW.

I THINK EVENTS ARE MOVING VERY SWIFTLY HERE AND I AM JUST

NOT PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN THIS KIND OF DISCUSSION.

Q: WELL, TOM, LET ME FOLLOW THAT UP. YOU KNOW, AFTER YOU LEAVE THE PODIUM AND WE KEEP WRITING ABOUT THIS AS EVENTS TRANSPIRE OVER THE DAY, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF TODAY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, OR AT LEAST THE STATE DEPARTMENT, STILL CONSIDERS SOMALI TO HAVE BEEN AN "INVADER" OF ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY.

SO THAT IF ARMS ARE SUPPLIED LATER IN THE DAY TO SOMALIA, I WANT TO KNOW IF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS AUTHORIZING ARMS TO AN INVADING FORCE.

A: BARR, I HAVE NO COMMENT.

Q: ARE THEY AN INVADER? TOM?
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A: I HAVE NO COMMENT.

Q: WHAT'S THE NEXT?

CAN YOU SAY WHETHER A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL DOES CHANGE THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION AS FAR AS THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED?

A: SINCE I AM NOT CONFIRMING THAT THERE IS IN FACT A WITHDRAWAL PROCEEDING AT THE MOMENT, I CANNOT GO INTO YOUR QUESTION.

Q: WHAT -- WOULD A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL CONSTITUTE A CHANGE IN THIS POLITICAL SITUATION?

A: OBVIOUSLY IT WOULD CONSTITUTE A CHANGE.

Q: TOM, PRESIDENT TITO WAS QUOTED YESTERDAY AS SAYING THAT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM ETHIOPIA ONCE THE OGADEN INVASION IS TERMINATED.

HIS STATEMENT, PRESUMABLY, DID NOT COME OUT OF THE BLUE. HE HAS BEEN HERE IN WASHINGTON, AND ETHIOPIA HAS BEEN A MAJOR PART, OR A PART, OF THE TALKS.

IS HE A FACTOR IN OUR CURRENT DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN ORDER TO PERSUADE THEM TO REDUCE THEIR OWN INVESTMENT IN ETHIOPIA?

A: I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.

Q: COULD YOU BE AT ALL ENLIGHTENING, TOM, ON WHAT -- YOU SAY HERE: THE WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE.

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CAN YOU BE AT ALL ENLIGHTENING ON WHAT THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE, OR WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN -- PROVIDED THERE IS A WITHDRAWAL?

A: NO. I'M SORRY, YOU KNOW I JUST CAN'T GET INTO THE QUESTION OF "NEXT STEPS." I THINK THE MATTERS WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY CLARIFIED -- I HOPE THAT THEY WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY CLARIFIED WITHIN A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. BUT I AM INSTRUCTED --

Q: WAIT A MINUTE, TOM -- THE SECRETARY -- SMOOTH TRANSITION --

-- ENORMOUSLY VALUABLE ON WHAT THE NEXT STEPS ARE. YOU CAN REPEAT THEM, CAN'T YOU? DON'T WE STILL WANT OAU ARBITRATION AND PERHAPS NEGOTIATIONS, AND PERHAPS A DEGREE OF AUTONOMY FOR THE OGADEN? OR IS THAT ALL CHANGED -- SHALL WE SAY?

A: MR. SHAPIRO, DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT WHAT VANCE SAID TODAY?

MR. SHAPIRO: YES. TODAY ON THE HILL SECRETARY VANCE SAID THAT WHAT WAS CALLED FOR WAS A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL AND THEN A WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES FROM THE AREA (MEANING THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS) AND THEN AN OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN OAU MEDIATION.

A: THANK YOU.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE SOUTHWESTERN PART OF ETHIOPIA, WHICH WAS ALSO INVADDED BY SOMALIA -- DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THEY MAY WITHDRAW FROM THE NON-OGADEN AREAS OF ETHIOPIA, WHICH
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THEY HAD INVADDED?

A: I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q: ONE MORE QUESTION ON SOMALIA, IF I MAY.

YOU SAID YOU LEARNED OF THIS "EARLIER THAN DAYLIGHT." WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

YESTERDAY IS EARLIER THAN DAYLIGHT TODAY.

A: NO, I THINK WE LEARNED OF IT VERY RECENTLY.

Q: WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?

A: I THINK THE QUESTION WAS: DID YOU LEARN ABOUT IT THIS MORNING AND I WAS TRYING TO INDICATE THAT WE PROBABLY LEARNED ABOUT IT BEFORE DAWN TODAY -- THIS MORNING.

Q: BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 6:00?

A: YES. VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5c695ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 14
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3166018
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 9, 1978
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, PGOV
To: ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS LONDON MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5c695ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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